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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/700,194	11/03/2003	Randy Edward Benway	114154-050	3952
24573	7590	01/13/2006	EXAMINER	
BELL, BOYD & LLOYD, LLC PO BOX 1135 CHICAGO, IL 60690-1135			KOVACS, ARPAD F	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			3671	
DATE MAILED: 01/13/2006				

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)
	10/700,194	BENWAY ET AL.
	Examiner	Art Unit
	Árpád Fábián Kovács	3671

– The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address –
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extension of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 22 December 2005.
 2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.
 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) Claim(s) 17-20 and 40-46 is/are pending in the application.
 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
 5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
 6) Claim(s) 17-20 and 40-46 is/are rejected.
 7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
 8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
 10) The drawing(s) filed on 01 February 2005 is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____. | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

1. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

2. Claims 17-20, new claims 40-46 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Yamashita et al (cited by the Applicant, 5894717).

Prior art discloses:

It is noted, as also discussed during the interview, dated 1/6/2006, that the region where the grass clippings are generated/cut is considered to be the cutting chamber, wherein the front portion is at the front region of the mower housing/deck delimited by the ref 17, the left side wheel, and the rear portion is at the rear region where the insert ref 38 is fastened or attached when a discharge of grass clipping is to be prevented.

Claim 17:

A mower deck comprising a top, sides, cutting chamber, front & rear, interior & outermost exterior surfaces, blade (fig 4);

Discharge (21);

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An insert, fastener, a portion of which is positioned adjacent to the outermost exterior surface wall of the rear portion of the sidewall (ref 38; col. 10, ln 34-44);
The insert having at least one other attachment region (see insert 38, at attachment region 39a in fig 6);

Claim 18:

Can be coupled via a single fastener (see fig 7);
The rear portion of the sidewall include a guide member 36a & b);

Claims 19-20:

A mulch ramp & discharge opening orientation with respect to the blade rotation in line with air & grass flow (either ref 44 or the bent forward portion of the mower deck as shown in fig 1 can act as a ramp to direct grass towards an inner portion of the top surface, also see fig 11, ref 52, showing the downwardly directed discharge wind);

cl. 40:

A mower deck comprising a top, sides, cutting chamber, front & rear, interior & outermost exterior surfaces, blade (fig 4);
Discharge wall & opening (at the end of ref. 21);

Material director along wall 36a and ends at ref 21;

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A fastener support wall adjacent to a second end of the material director (at 36ar);

An insert (38);

At least one fastener (at ref. 36ar & goes through ref 39a);

cl. 41, 44:

a plurality of elements as claimed and shown in fig 4;

cl. 42-43, 45-46:

a guide member & first & second attachment members (the wall portion rearward from 36ar, opening at ref 39a).

Response to Arguments

3. Applicant's arguments filed with amendments to claims 17-20 & new claims 40-46 on 12/22/2005 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive. Applicant's arguments are moot in view of the interview conducted on 1/6/2006.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Árpád Fábián Kovács whose telephone number is 571 272 6990. The examiner can normally be reached on Mo-Th.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Thomas B. Will can be reached on 571 272 6998. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).



Árpád Fábián Kovács
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 3671

AFK

REPLACEMENT SHEET

Title: INTERCHANGEABLE MULCHING/DISCHARGE MOWING DECK
Inventor: Randy E. Benway et al.
App. No.: 10/700,194
Docket No.: 114154-050



Approved
1/21/2005
JW

FIG. 10

10/11

